**These letters were published in the Guardian newspaper during spring 2009. Readers write to Lynn Gascoigne and tell her their problems and ask for her advice.**

*Dear Lynn,*

*My 23-year-old sister is seriously overweight. It's not a matter*

*of lack of knowledge about nutrition - she knows what healthy*

*food looks like and would naturally opt for a salad rather than*

*chips. However, her portions are very big and she eats too*

*often. I think she associates food with love - she seems to feel*

*that eating generates good feelings, even if the results have the*

*opposite effect on her self-esteem. As a* [*family*](http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/family)*, we are*

*passionate about food. We all enjoy cooking and regularly have*

*healthy family meals together.*

*My sister doesn't complain about her weight, she dresses well and looks good. However, she sometimes mentions that she is larger than she would like to be. The rest of my family are naturally fairly thin. I broached the subject subtly and she got very upset. Despite this, as far as I'm aware, she has never been on a diet. Our family is close and my sister has a supportive partner, who also likes his food.*

*How do I get through to her, without damaging our relationship, that she will be happier if she eats less and exercises more?*

Dear Lynne,

I think I've fallen in love with a girl at work. At the Christmas party I told her how I felt, but she brushed me off – apparently she has a boyfriend and doesn't want to be with me. Since then we've hardly spoken and I am so sad. How can we work together now? I'm wondering if I should quit.

Dear Lynne,

I have been with my boyfriend for four years. We have been intending to get married, buy a house and start a family, but recently I have been having doubts. He is from a Muslim family (I am not) and while he is not strict, his mother is quite devout. She's putting pressure on us to marry because she doesn't agree with us living together. I am nervous of what sort of daughter-in-law and wife she expects me to be. Along with this, my partner has a sketchy employment history and I am the main breadwinner, though I really dislike my job. Previously I was in a relationship for the same length of time, with a hardworking, successful man, whom I left. My only other long-term relationship also ended after four years. While that was a destructive relationship, and I have never regretted leaving, I am wondering if I have a pattern of getting cold feet. Now I am 34, I really want to have children soon, and I love my boyfriend. But I am worried that I'm resigning myself to a life of regret, disappointment and compromise if I stay with him.

*Dear Lynne,*

*My husband is an alcoholic. He drinks half a bottle of whisky every night. He says it helps him relax and sleep, but he comes to bed drunk every night and often thrashes about and swears. During the day, there is no sign of this sort of behavior, although he does have a slight tremor in his hands.*

*He is on heart and diabetic medication, but otherwise, he leads an active life and eats healthily too. I dilute his whisky when I am able to, but not by too much, as he can tell by the taste if it is too watered down.*

*He has been drinking heavily for 20 years as a result of stress - this was largely due to his job, but he has been retired for eight years now. He has no debts and a regular pension, so he doesn't have any financial worries. I am very concerned about the effect this heavy drinking may be having on his liver and general health. Apart from a cough, which is due to his smoking, he is in relatively good health.*

*Should I talk to my GP? My husband does not think he has a problem with alcohol at all.*

*What can be done?*

1. **

*Dear Lynne,*

*I am pregnant and the child’s father left me when he found out about the baby. He said he didn’t believe the baby was his.*

*We have been friends since we were fifteen and started going out last year on my sixteenth birthday. We went on a school trip together and I got pregnant.*

*I do not want to be a single parent! I do not want to wait to finish school and be independent. I have no education, no job and feel that soon my life will be over.*

*I am really scared and don’t want to tell my parents. They will go MAD! We are Catholics and abortion is not an option if they find out. I can’t do this by myself and desperately need someone to talk to.*

*Please give me some advice about who to talk to about this?*

*I am running out of time.*

1. **Pick one letter and quickly read it? Try to guess as much as you can.**
2. **Discuss what the letter is about with your partner.**
3. **How would you give advice to the person writing the letter?**
4. **ROLEPLAY**

**One person plays the professional health care worker e.g.) doctor, nurse, psychiatric counselor, childcare worker, pharmacist and who is the person with the problem.**

**Act out a situation in which you both discuss the problem and how to tackle it.**

(This should be 3-5 minutes long)

1. **Write a lesson log** (10 minutes)
2. **Pretend that you are Lynne Gasgoine and reply to one of the letters.** (Individual)

Find the words in the puzzle

**ABORTION – ALCOHOLIC – BREADWINNER – CATHOLIC - CHILDREN**

**COMPROMISE – DESPERATE – DISAPPOINT – FINANCIAL – GENERATE – MARRIAGE – MUSLIM – PASSIONATE – PREGNANT – REGRET – RELATIONSHIP – RETIRED – SUCCESSFUL – WORRIES**



Match the words. Write (n) (v) besides the nouns and verbs.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **GP (General Fractioned)** | 1. **Allmennlege** |
| 1. **A debt** | 1. **Terapi** |
| 1. **A relationship** | 1. **Sunn** |
| 1. **A sketchy employment history** | 1. **Sterk troende** |
| 1. **Abortion** | 1. **Selvfølelse** |
| 1. **Breadwinner** | 1. **Pensjon** |
| 1. **Counseling** | 1. **Over lengre tid** |
| 1. **Destructive** | 1. **Ødeleggende** |
| 1. **Devout** | 1. **Lidenskapelig** |
| 1. **Drinking heavily** | 1. **Helse** |
| 1. **Health** | 1. **Et forhold** |
| 1. **Healthy** | 1. **Ernæring** |
| 1. **Long term** | 1. **Enslig foreldre** |
| 1. **Nutrition** | 1. **En gjeld** |
| 1. **Passionate** | 1. **Abort** |
| 1. **Pension** | 1. **Å være lei seg** |
| 1. **Self-esteem** | 1. **Å være familie forsørger** |
| 1. **Single parent** | 1. **Å være en suksess** |
| 1. **To associate** | 1. **Å være en alkoholiker** |
| 1. **To be an alcoholic** | 1. **Å være bekymret for** |
| 1. **To be concerned** | 1. **Å være bekymret for** |
| 1. **To be successful** | 1. **Å si opp (å gi opp på noe)** |
| 1. **To be upset** | 1. **Å sammenligne** |
| 1. **To be worried** | 1. **Å romstere rundt** |
| 1. **To damage** | 1. **Å presse på noe** |
| 1. **To generate** | 1. **Å ødelegge** |
| 1. **To have doubts** | 1. **Å nevne** |
| 1. **To mention** | 1. **Å lage** |
| 1. **To put the pressure on** | 1. **Å ha kvaler** |
| 1. **To quit** | 1. **Å ha en dårlig** |
| 1. **To regret something** | 1. **Å gi seg/Å si opp** |
| 1. **To resign (yourself to)** | 1. **Å drikke mye** |
| 1. **To thrash about** | 1. **Å anger på noe** |